

CHRISTMAS FAMILY FAITH TRAIL

Discover new ways to grow your family's faith at home



The United Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia
Mission Resourcing

Blueprint
ministries

INTERGEN
TEAM



LUTHERAN
CHURCH
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NORTHERN TERRITORY

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Welcome to the Christmas Family Faith Trail – an opportunity to explore a variety of activity stations and discover new ways to grow your family's faith at home.

This trail is about equipping families (of ALL ages) to grow in faith and one size does not suit all.

You are free to pick and choose what activities to do – there is no expectation that you'll do everything. We are aware that not every activity will connect with every family, particularly depending on the age and interests of the people in your household.

Many of these activities involve different senses and different ways of connecting and growing with God.

We encourage you as a family (or group of families or even an intergenerational group) to **decide on at least one thing** you could use or adapt from this resource to do at home together during this Christmas season.

You might choose to do one activity station (one page) in each week of Advent and the final station just before or after Christmas Day. You may prefer

to do different parts of each station on different days in each week, depending on your family or group's schedule and attention span, particularly for younger children. This resource is yours to adapt. Please feel free to write extra notes, highlight particular ideas of interest and use in whatever way is most helpful for your family or group.

We hope this booklet provides a few ideas and resources for you and your family's faith to grow. This is not about adding another thing to the Christmas busy-ness. Instead, in the midst of everything, as you catch up with people, perhaps welcoming them into your home, or as you play in a sand pit or eat at a table or go for a walk outdoors...

May you – play together – talk and ask questions – pray and bless each other and - invite God into your ordinary everyday places and plans so that you may grow in faith together.



Some Christian words:

Growing in faith -

can also be called 'discipleship' or 'growing as a disciple/follower of Jesus' or 'faith formation'.

Advent -

this is a season of the church year. It is a time of waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. It can be a time to prepare ourselves – our spiritual selves – for Christmas. It starts four Sundays before Christmas Day and finishes at Christmas.





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WE PRAY THAT YOUR FAMILY OR GROUP WILL GROW TOGETHER
AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

*May you celebrate together the great news
that Jesus our Saviour was born for you*



STATION 1 - GOD'S PEACE AT CHRISTMAS

LOCATION:

Entrance/ front door

FROM THE BIBLE:

The Angel speaks to Joseph
Matthew 1:20-25

ACTIVITY PRE-SCHOOL:

Make a welcome sign or a Christmas wreath for your front door.
You could use a blackboard and chalk or print/write or draw words of welcome to laminate or paint the word "Welcome" on a piece of wood.

ACTIVITY PRIMARY:

Make a welcome sign or a Christmas wreath for your front door. See <https://craftulate.com/christmas-wreaths-for-kids/> for simple wreath ideas. You could use the words, "Welcome – Peace be with you!" or "God's Peace to all who enter here".

Extra activity: Make other messages about Christmas that you could put up inside or outside your home. (E.g. Good News: Jesus is born!)

ACTIVITY ALL-AGE:

The angel proclaimed what the Saviour's name would be –
Jesus (v21) – he will save people from their sins
Immanuel (v23) – God with us.

What do these names tell us about Jesus?

What does your name or nickname mean? Does it tell anything about you?

Make a name plaque for your name. Make a name plaque for Jesus' name and its meaning (or the name Immanuel).

Display it in your home at Christmas.

PRAYER:

Read John 14:27

Pray for peace in your home this Christmas.

Pray for peace for people you know or for those who live in other parts of the world.

Pray for God's peace in your heart.

REFLECTION:

Talk about:

- How you might hear from God this Christmas.
An angel in a dream? In His Word?
- How Christmas is about more than a baby.

OTHER IDEAS:

Explore the story of "The Angel's visit to Mary" in Luke 1:26-38 and the story of Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-25 and 1:39-80).

Make an Advent calendar or Advent chain to count down the days to Christmas.



To make your own sign, visit:

<http://bee-ingmommy.blogspot.com/2016/06/pallet-welcome-sign.html>



**Chat
Bubble:**

How do you welcome people to your home?

What gives you peace during this busy season?

STATION 2- GOD'S LOVE AT CHRISTMAS

LOCATION:

Begin in the hallway, then move to kitchen/dining table

FROM THE BIBLE:

Travelling to Bethlehem and Jesus' Birth

Luke 2:1-5 (Read in the hallway)

Luke 2:6-7 (Read in the kitchen)

ACTIVITY PRE-SCHOOL:

Find a doll to wrap in a blanket, a sheet or strips of cloth and then place in a box. Talk about what a manger is and what it was usually used for. Read the account in a Bible story book.

Play the game: "No room in the Inn"

You need: Chalk, A4 paper or newspaper to make squares (approx. 30 cm square), Christmas Music, 3 or more people, a designated place for the stable.

How to play: The squares are placed or drawn on the floor. Have one less square than the number of people.

The squares represent rooms in the Inn at Bethlehem. Play the music and encourage people to walk amongst the squares.

Pause the music. Each participant finds a square to stand in/on and calls out "I've got a room!"

The person who doesn't find a square is 'out' and the others say, "You can stay in the stable!" That person removes a square, or puts an item in the drawn square, eg a block or cup, so it cannot be used in the game. Then they go and stand in the stable. The game continues until one square remains.

(Adapted from "Christmas for KIDS" – CEP Christian Education Publications 2005)

ACTIVITY PRIMARY:

What might people do today to get ready for the birth of a baby?

Discuss with your children:

- ** Where they were born.
- ** What you did to prepare for their birth.
- ** Show items they had when they were babies (Photos, baby clothes, toys, bottle, cradle etc.)
- ** Wonder about what Mary and Joseph did to prepare for the birth of Jesus.

Read the Bible words then play the game "No Room" (see above).

Extra activity: Make heart shaped biscuits – Write "Jesus" or "God" on the heart.

Wrap in cellophane and give as gifts.



Simple Christmas Cookie Recipe

Ingredients:

100g butter, softened
50g caster sugar

170g plain flour
Icing and edible decorations (optional)

Method:

- Beat the butter and sugar until pale and creamy, and work in the flour to make a stiff dough. You may find it easier to do this with your hands.
- Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently until smooth. Roll out to about 0.5 - 1cm thick and using well-floured heart shape cutters, cut out a dozen hearts.
- Carefully transfer to the baking tray or sheet and bake for 12 to 15 minutes.
- Leave to cool for a few minutes to firm up, before transferring to a wire cooling rack.
- Once they are completely cool, decorate with the icing. You could pipe the name "Jesus" or sprinkle with some edible decorations.

**ACTIVITY ALL-AGE:**

What things have you had to register for? Think about how God used the timing of the census. Find a map of the Middle East for the time of Jesus' birth. Find Nazareth, Bethlehem and the route Mary and Joseph could have travelled. It was about 110 kilometres. Find Judea, Galilee and Syria. Using a map of your area, start where you live and see where you could get to if you travelled 110 kilometres.

Make some heart shaped cookies (as on page 4).

PRAYER:

Read John 3:16

Ask God to prepare your heart to celebrate God's incredible love this Christmas. Write your prayer in the middle of the heart shape. <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/heart-envelope.html>

Fold along the dots and then float it on water (in a tub or bowl). What happens? Pray together for ways to show God's love to your household, your extended family, friends and acquaintances, especially those who might be struggling.

REFLECTION:

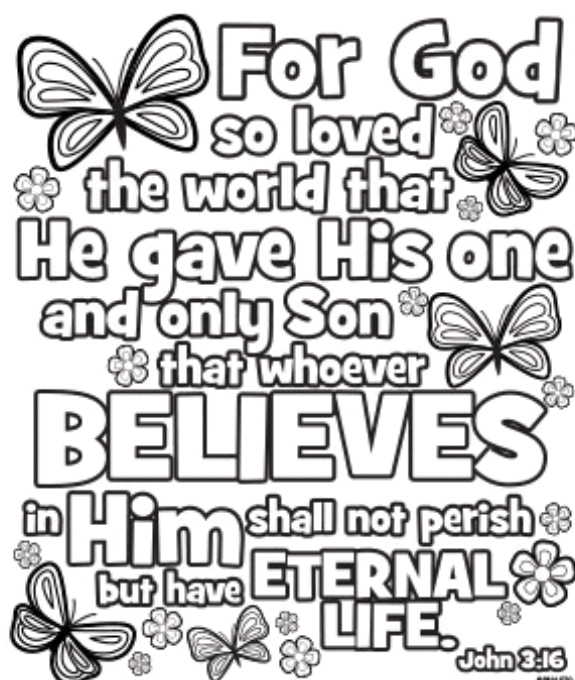
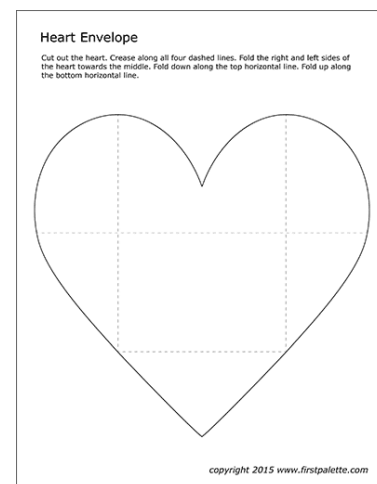
Talk about:

If Jesus is God, why wasn't He born in a palace?

OTHER IDEAS:

Set up a Nativity scene with Mary, Joseph, baby Jesus and the stable (or make a nativity scene and a manger using wood, Lego, pop sticks or recycled materials from around your home).

Print and colour the Bible verse John 3:16 that tells us about God's love
<http://www.freefuneeaster.com/easter-coloring-page/john-316/>.

**Chat Bubble:**

How do you prepare for guests at Christmas?

How would you prepare if someone special was coming to your house?

STATION 3 - GOD'S HOPE AT CHRISTMAS

LOCATION:

Outside

FROM THE BIBLE:

The Shepherds and the Angels

Luke 2:8-16

ACTIVITY PRE-SCHOOL:

Discuss what the job of a shepherd was.

Play the Game: "Where is my Lamb?"

You need: A tea towel or piece of cloth for a shepherd's head piece, some elastic or cord to hold the head piece in place, a toy lamb or a cardboard cut-out of a lamb.

How to play: Participants sit in a circle. One person is chosen to be the shepherd and wear the head piece. The shepherd stands in the middle of the circle and closes their eyes. Hide the lamb behind someone's back or somewhere in the room. The shepherd opens his or her eyes and has 3 guesses as to where the lamb is. Once discovered, a new shepherd is chosen and the game begins again.

Adaptation: Add a bell to the lamb as a clue to where it may be hiding.

(Adapted from "Christmas for KIDS" – CEP Christian Education Publications 2005)

As you read the Bible story from Luke 2:8-16, pause between each part and encourage children to act it out. For example:

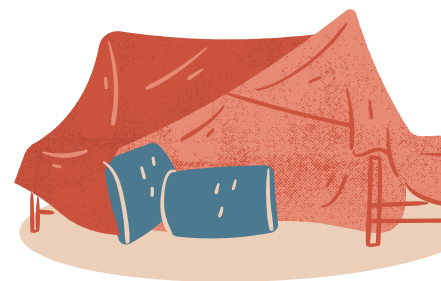
- Out in the field (v. 8) Children pretend to be sheep and "Baa". Round them up and bring them to their pen.
- An angel appears (v. 9-12) Children pretend to be the shepherds who are very scared.
- The Angel Choir (v. 13-14) Sing a simple joyful song to God.
- Off to Bethlehem (v. 15-16) Go back inside your home and add shepherds to your Nativity scene.

ACTIVITY PRIMARY:

Build a tent or shelter for the shepherds using blankets or old sheets.

Parents and children read and act out the account of the shepherds and angels.

When you go inside, use the Bible passage to help you fill in the grid below.



	How did the shepherds feel?	How would you feel?
Watching the sheep		
An angel appears		
Listening to the angel's message		
Seeing the angel choir		
Travelling to Bethlehem		
Knowing Jesus loves all people		

Think about how the shepherd's felt and how you might have felt on this amazing night.

Follow these instructions <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Hand-Puppet>

to make a shepherd puppet and show their different feelings and/or to make an angel puppet to share their message of hope.





ACTIVITY ALL-AGE:

The angel shared the good news of Jesus' birth.

This "good news" is worth sharing. Make a Christmas

decoration from felt or card (see <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/christmas-tree-ornaments.html> for some simple templates).

Add the word "hope" to it. Place it on the Christmas tree or give it as a gift to one of your neighbours.

Is there a decoration you have or a tradition you could do this week that reflects hope?



PRAYER:

Share some things you hope for.

Pray that God will fill you with hope as you trust in God's promises.

REFLECTION:

Talk about:

- Why do you think God allowed the shepherds to be the first people to hear the Good News of Jesus' birth?
- Why were the shepherds told not to be afraid? Has anyone said to you, "Don't be afraid"? Why?
- What things make you feel afraid? What brings you comfort and hope?

Read Romans 15:13.

OTHER IDEAS:

Make a Good News banner out of bunting or an old bed sheet to hang on your front

fence with a message like: Good News: Jesus is born!

Or write it in chalk on your driveway or footpath.

**Chat
Bubble:**

*Tell about a time you received
Good News. How did you feel?*

*Good news brings hope.
What are your hopes this Christmas?*

STATION 4- GOD'S JOY AT CHRISTMAS

LOCATION:

Living room

FROM THE BIBLE:

The Shepherds visit Jesus

Luke 2:16-20

ACTIVITY PRE-SCHOOL:

The shepherds were so happy, they could not stop praising God for all the good things God allowed them to see and hear. How could you praise God this Christmas?

Make some celebration streamers or a musical instrument (see the link below). Sing and dance to Christmas music.



ACTIVITY PRIMARY:

Find all the action words in the passage (hurried, found, heard, saw, spread the message, amazed, treasured, pondered, glorified, praised, returned, and watched). Write these words on pop sticks and put them in a container. Play charades by taking turns to choose a pop stick and act out the word.

Make a praise shaker or other instrument - for ideas see

<https://www.redtedart.com/musical-instrument-crafts-for-kids/>



ACTIVITY ALL-AGE:

Choose some joyful Christmas carols to accompany with musical instruments, listen to or sing.

Decorate your home to show joy! Add bells and ornaments that sparkle around your home or add them to your Christmas tree.



PRAYER:

Pray for God to fill you with joy as you celebrate Jesus' birth.

Ask God to reveal ways you can share your joy with others.

Thank you God for the gift of Jesus, our Saviour.

Help us to share the joy of the good news about Jesus with others this Christmas through our words and actions. AMEN.

REFLECTION:

Read 2 Corinthians 9:15 in a few different translations. Talk about the meaning of the verse

OTHER IDEAS:

Make the words PEACE, LOVE, HOPE and JOY from play dough, Lego or other recycled materials.

**Chat
Bubble:**

*How do you express joy
for God's gift of Jesus?*

STATION 5 - WORSHIP AT CHRISTMAS

LOCATION:

Choose a favourite place where you can focus on Jesus, such as near the Nativity or Christmas tree or at the dining table.

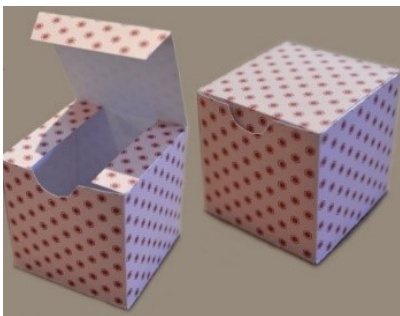
FROM THE BIBLE:

The wise men visit Jesus
Matthew 2:1-12

ACTIVITY PRE-SCHOOL:

Go on a star hunt. Cut out some stars (or use prepared stars). One person hides the stars in a room before others enter.

Say: The wise men followed the star to find baby Jesus. Can you find the stars hidden around the room? When the stars are found bring everyone together. Listen to the Bible story about the Wise Men. Then add the wise men to your Nativity scene.



ACTIVITY PRIMARY:

Hold a Nativity Treasure Hunt, see: <https://www.eggloentertainment.com/printable-follow-that-star-nativity-treasure-hunt/>

Read the Bible passage. The Wise men were told to go to Bethlehem and make a careful search. What or who did God use to help the wise men find Jesus? How did you hear or find out about Jesus? Talk about the people who have helped you learn about Him.

What did the wise men do to worship Jesus? How do you worship Jesus?

Make a gift box (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEv998mXG_8)

Write a blessing and put it in the box.

Give it to someone in your family or to someone who comes to visit.

ACTIVITY ALL-AGE:

The wise men offered their treasures to the new born King. What do you consider are your treasures? What treasures could you offer Jesus this Christmas? Make a gift box (see above) and write your treasures on a piece of card. Put it in the gift box and place it near the Nativity as if offering your treasures to Jesus.

PRAYER:

For the gift of Jesus born as a human being	Everyone say: We thank You, Lord
For the gift of Jesus more precious than gold	Everyone say: We thank You, Lord
For the gift of Jesus, Saviour of the world	Everyone say: We thank You, Lord. AMEN

(Adapted from "Christmas for KIDS" – CEP Christian Education Publications 2005)

REFLECTION:

Look at Phil. 2:9-11. What do these verses say about worshipping Jesus?
What do you wonder about when you think of the Christmas story?

OTHER IDEAS:

Read Matthew 25:40. What act of service could you do for others as an act of worship to Jesus? Perhaps you could bake something, make a Christmas card or invite a neighbour to your place for afternoon tea. Is there someone in need who you could invite to celebrate Christmas with your family? Share with them the Good News of Christmas!

**Chat
Bubble:**

*How do you
worship Jesus?*





Photo: Pexels.com

ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR EXPLORING THE CHRISTMAS STORY

or starting a new family tradition

Family Movie Time

Choose some Christmas-themed movies to watch as a family. Perhaps view the Christmas story in animation or choose from the links at the end of this booklet. Wear Christmas themed pyjamas and make popcorn with cinnamon or other Christmassy spices.

Music and Dance

Play Christmas music for children to dance to. Use instruments, pots and pans and spoons. Find some dress-ups and twirl scarves to the music. You could also play music for any age to dance to, perhaps some jazz style Christmas songs. Turn on the Christmas lights, get dressed up in your 'Sunday Christmas best' and enjoy!

Advent Activities

- [A Jesse Tree](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-JesseTree1) - read about the origins ([tinyurl.com/CFFT-JesseTree1](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-JesseTree1)) and then make your own, complete with matching devotions ([tinyurl.com/CFFT-JesseTree2](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-JesseTree2))
- [The Jesus Storybook Bible Advent Guide](https://www.sallylloyd-jones.com/2020-advent/) - from the brilliant Jesus Storybook Bible (you may like to search the site for this year's version) (<https://www.sallylloyd-jones.com/2020-advent/>)
- [Christmas on the Move](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-ChristmasOnTheMove) (from Strandz) - an Advent Resource with nativity scene/characters and colouring in pages for people of all ages ([tinyurl.com/CFFT-ChristmasOnTheMove](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-ChristmasOnTheMove))
- [100 ways to celebrate Christmas](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-100Ways) - lots of fun ideas! ([tinyurl.com/CFFT-100Ways](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-100Ways))



Photo: Pexels.com



SHORT VIDEOS AND STORIES ABOUT THE CHRISTMAS STORY, *explaining Advent or different Christmas traditions*

Please note when clicking on some video links that ads may play beforehand.

Saddleback Kids

A series of short animated videos of the Christmas story

- The Story of Christmas (Mary and Joseph)
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-StoryOfChristmas1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- The Story of Christmas (Jesus is Born)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI>
- The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Shepherds)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJIC57EvYFo>
- The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Wise Men)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk1LhngROCM>

According to Kids

Fun creative re-tellings of the Christmas story performed by kids

- Christmas According to Kids
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-ChristmasAccordingToKids](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-ChristmasAccordingToKids)
- An Unexpected Christmas
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-AnUnexpectedChristmas](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-AnUnexpectedChristmas)
- The Christmas Story
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-TheChristmasStory](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-TheChristmasStory)
- Star News Bethlehem
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-StarNewsBethlehem](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-StarNewsBethlehem)
- When God Was Born
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhenGodWasBorn](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhenGodWasBorn)

What's in the Bible?

A YouTube channel with videos designed to walk kids and families through the entire Bible using puppetry! Here are some Christmas focused videos.

- Why do we have Christmas Trees?
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhyChristmasTrees](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhyChristmasTrees)
- Who is Santa Claus?
[tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhosSantaClaus](https://www.tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhosSantaClaus)
- Why do we call it Christmas?
<https://youtu.be/u9JMpH8dPF4>

Lost Sheep

Great Christmas stories from Andrew McDonough

- Jesus was a Refugee, Tonight in the Palace, The Three Wise Camels, Jed & Roy McCoy, Bethlehem Town
tinyurl.com/CFFT-LostSheepStories

Just Because

Fun & helpful Christmas videos

- Bethlehemian Rhapsody
tinyurl.com/CFFT-BethlehemianRhapsody
- 12 Days of Christmas
tinyurl.com/CFFT-12DaysOfChristmas
- Advent in 2 minutes
tinyurl.com/CFFT-AdventIn2Minutes
- The First Christmas (Bible App for Kids)
tinyurl.com/CFFT-TheFirstChristmas



ONLINE VIDEOS AND ACTIVITIES

Happyland

www.happyland.com.au

Happyland is a safe online game developed by Lutheran Media for children aged 4—7. You will discover activities throughout the year, including an online Advent calendar counting up to Christmas and offers of DVDs and booklets.

Why Christmas?

<https://www.whychristmas.com/>

An assortment of Christmas content including a Christmas nativity comic, Advent Calendar and Nativity App with Christmas carols and the Christmas story.

Bible Society

<https://www.play.bible/category/kids>

Sign up and receive free kid's resources and Bible stories online.

Crossroads Church Kids' Club

<https://crossroadskidsclub.net/gods-story-christmas/>

A short animated video of the Christmas story.



ACTIVITIES TO DOWNLOAD OR ORDER

Grow Ministries

<https://www.growministries.org.au>

- De-clutter December - This special December calendar is designed to help you de-clutter your month, prioritise activities and focus on the things that matter most to you and your children
https://www.growministries.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/11/Declutter-December_2019.pdf
- Family Advent Activity Tree - Follow the days of Advent by placing a candle/star/ Christmas decoration on each day and participate in the activity or idea together as a family
<https://www.growministries.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/11/Appendix-27-Family-Advent-Activity-Tree-1.pdf>
- Create a Jesse Tree - The Jesse tree represents Jesus' family tree. Prepare symbols (supplied) and hang them on a branch or Christmas tree during Advent. There are bible verses to share for each day
<https://www.growministries.org.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/11/Appendix-21-Create-a-Jesse-Tree.pdf>

Lutheran Tract Mission

<https://www.ltm.org.au/>

- Order online - Countdown to Christmas Advent Sticker Calendars, colouring and activity booklets, bookmarks, text cards and postcards relating to Christmas.



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Email: admin@blueprintministries.org.au

Phone: 08 8267 5211

Web: blueprintministries.org.au

INTERGEN
TEAM

Email: intergen@sa.uca.org.au

Phone: 08 8236 4243

Web: sa.uca.org.au/intergen/family-resources